

during all these eighteen or twenty years had three cases been under simultaneous treatment within the confines of the city.

"Well, there are five now," called out a voice from the back of the hall.

I drew myself up and made ready to wither this untruthful brawler with my best election scorn, when, of a sudden, I remembered the Red-headed Man, and passed on to the consideration of foreign affairs.

From that moment all life went out of my speech, and, as it seemed to me, the enthusiasm of the meeting died away. As soon as it was over I made inquiries, to find that the truth had been hidden from me—there were five, if not seven cases of smallpox in different parts of the city, and the worst feature of the facts was that three of the patients were children attending different schools. One of these children, it was ascertained, had been among those who were playing round the fountain about a fortnight since, although he was not one whom the red-haired tramp touched, but the other two had not been near the fountain. The presumption was, therefore, that they had contracted the disease through some other source of infection, perhaps at the lodging-house where the man had spent the night after bathing in the water. Also it seemed that, drawn thither by the heat, in all two or three hundred children had visited the fountain square on this particular evening, and that many of them had drunk water out of the basin.

Never do I remember feeling more frightened than when these facts came to my knowledge, for, added to the possible terrors of the position, was my constitutional fear of the disease which I have already described. On my way homewards I met a friend who told me that one of the children was dead, the malady, which was of an awful type, having done its work very swiftly.

Like a first flake from a snow-cloud, like a first leaf falling in autumn from among the myriads on some great tree, so did this little life sink from our number into the silence of the grave. Ah! how many were to follow? There is a record, I believe, but I cannot give it. In Dunchester alone, with its population of about 50,000, I know that we had over 5,000 deaths, and Dunchester was a focus from which the pestilence spread through the kingdom, destroying and destroying and destroying with a fury that has not been equalled since the days of the Black Death.

But all this was still to come, for the plague did not get a grip at once. An iron system of isolation was put in force, and every possible means was adopted by the town authorities, who, for the most part, were anti-vaccinationists, to suppress the facts. As might have been expected also, the

party in power did not wish the political position to be complicated by an outcry for the passing of a new smallpox law, so few returns were published, and as little information as possible was given to the papers.

For awhile there was a lull; the subject of smallpox was *taboo*, and nobody heard much about it beyond vague and indefinite rumours. Indeed, most of us were busy with the question of the hour—the eternal question of beer, its purity and the method of its sale. For my part, I made few inquiries; like the ostrich of fable I hid my head in the sands of political excitement, hoping that the arrows of pestilence would pass us by.

And yet, although I breathed no word of my fears to a living soul, in my heart I was terribly afraid.

(To be continued.)



THE following is an interesting account of the Bishop of Tasmania's palace, on the Furneaux Islands, Bass Straits. "It has been built for me," says the Bishop, "by Mr. E. Stephens, the wood having been given me as a present by a good and generous friend in Launceston, known far and wide as a builder of the highest character and capacity. He had found me last year in trouble with my tent, at night, during a gale of wind, and this was his practical method of meeting my future difficulties. It is not an immense mansion; 17 ft. by 11 ft., amply sufficient for all purposes, and built, by leave of the Education Department, on the corner of the school reserve, but removable at any time at their pleasure. The furniture is of the simplest at Bishops court, much resembling a miner's hut, but quite sufficient. The hardest part of the housework is cutting the wood for the fire. It means taking the wheelbarrow and axe, and departing into the bush; but I think it right to indulge in this physical exercise as useful to oneself and an example to others."



ONE of the missionaries of the C.M.S., stationed at Omdurman, has returned from a tour a hundred miles up the Blue Nile to Sennaar. In winding up the journal recording this tour, he bears the following witness to the work of the British in the Soudan:—"After what we have seen of the earnest efforts of our British officers to administer justice and relieve the sufferings of the people committed to their care, we cannot but feel that a brighter day is dawning on the Soudan, and that, however indirectly, the influence of Christianity is already being brought to bear upon its people."